



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Jan. 30, 2006

For More Information, Contact:

Dawn Mayer
Division of Injury Prevention and Control
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.4536
or 800.472.2286 (press 1)
E-mail: drmayer@state.nd.us

Governor Proclaims *Child Passenger Safety Month*

BISMARCK, N.D. – Governor John Hoeven has proclaimed February as *Child Passenger Safety Month* in North Dakota.

“Children are our most valuable resource in North Dakota,” Hoeven said. “I encourage everyone to ensure that all children are appropriately buckled up every time they ride in a motor vehicle.”

Changes in the state’s child passenger safety law this year help ensure that children ride more safely. Effective Aug. 1, 2005, children younger than 7 are required to ride in a child restraint (car seat or booster seat) – unless they weigh more than 80 pounds and are more than 57 inches (4 feet, 9 inches) tall. Children who ride in booster seats must use both the lap belt and the shoulder belt. The law also requires that children ages 7 through 17 use a child restraint or a seat belt.

The North Dakota Department of Health offers the following guidelines to help parents comply with the law and select the right child restraint for their child’s age and weight:

- Babies should ride in rear-facing seats until they are at least 1 year old and weigh at least 20 pounds.
- Children who weigh more than 20 pounds and are at least 1 year of age should ride in a forward-facing car seat with harness until they weigh 40 pounds.
- Children who weigh between 40 and 80 pounds and are less than 4 feet, 9 inches tall should use a booster seat. Both lap and shoulder belts must be used when using a booster seat.
- Children who weigh more than 80 pounds and are more than 4 feet, 9 inches tall usually can fit into a lap and shoulder belt.

-- more --

600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@state.nd.us

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

Other safety tips recommended by the department:

- Car seats should be used correctly, according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Refer to the vehicle owner's manual when installing car seats.
- Children ages 13 and younger should ride in the back seat – even if there is not an airbag.
- Children should not be transported in the cargo area of pickup trucks, vans or station wagons.

During *Child Passenger Safety Month*, public health agencies, law enforcement officers, Safe Kids coalitions and Safe Communities programs across the state will be reminding children and parents about the importance of using safety restraints on every trip. Representatives will be visiting schools, daycares and other locations to share their safety messages using “Buckle Up” materials developed by the North Dakota Department of Health and the North Dakota Department of Transportation. The materials contain entertaining and educational activities that remind children of the importance of buckling up when they ride in motor vehicles.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and injury to North Dakota children. From 2000 through 2004 in North Dakota, 57 children younger than 18 died as occupants in motor vehicle crashes and 4,541 were injured.

For more information about child passenger safety, contact Dawn Mayer at 800.472.2286 (press 1).

-- 30 --

Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.

Proclamation
Child Passenger Safety Month
February 2006

WHEREAS, our children are our most valuable resource and the foundation of North Dakota's future; and

WHEREAS, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and injury to North Dakota children younger than 18 years of age; and

WHEREAS, the use of car safety seats, booster seats and seat belts can greatly increase the chances of surviving a motor vehicle crash; and

WHEREAS, North Dakota law requires children younger than the age of 7 to be correctly buckled in a child restraint (car seat or booster seat) and children ages 7 through 17 to be correctly buckled in a child restraint or seat belt; and

WHEREAS, North Dakotans are encouraged to ensure that all children are appropriately buckled up every time they ride in a motor vehicle.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim February 2006, **CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY MONTH** in the state of North Dakota.

John Hoeven
Governor